

**EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT**

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.
2. Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Anthony F. Bonner Jr. on 12/09/2009.

***Response to Arguments***

3. Applicant's amendment/arguments, see remarks pages 15-31, filed on 11/09/2009, with respect to claims 1-4, 7-11, 13-19, 22-27, 29 and 30 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of these claims has been withdrawn.
4. Claims 1, 3-4, 7- 11, 13- 19, 22-27, 29 and 30 are allowed.
5. Application has been amended as follows:
  - Claim1. A communication method comprising:  
receiving, by a computing device, an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;  
waiting a predefined time interval prior to prompting the first user for permission;  
prompting the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;  
receiving an input from the first user, the input being indicative of the permission to convey the IM message to the third user; and

conveying the IM message to the third user in response to receiving the input.

determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user;

indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user;

prompting the first user to join the IM chat session;

in response to receiving an indication that the first user wants to join the IM chat session, prompting the second user and the fourth user to allow the first user to join the IM chat session; and

in response to receiving an indication that the second user and the fourth user want to allow the first user to join the IM chat session, facilitating joining of the first user to the IM chat session.

- Claim 2. (Canceled).
- Claim 3. The method of ~~claim 2~~, claim 1, further comprising:

indicating to the first user that the IM message is being conveyed to the third user.

- Claim 4. The method of ~~claim 2~~, claim 1, further comprising:

indicating to the third user that the IM message originated from the first user.

- Claim 5. (Canceled).
- Claim 6. (Canceled).
- Claim 7. The method of ~~claim 6~~, claim 1, further comprising:

indicating to the first user, in the absence of a response from the second user during the predefined time interval, that the second user is unavailable.

- Claim 8. The method of ~~claim 6~~, claim 1, wherein requesting permission from the first user is responsive to an absence of an input from the second user during the predefined time interval.
- Claim 9. A communication method comprising:

receiving, by a computing device, an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;

waiting a predefined time interval prior to prompting the first user for permission;  
prompting the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;  
conveying the IM message to a the third user;  
determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user;

indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user;

prompting the first user to join the IM chat session;  
in response to receiving an indication that the first user wants to join the IM chat session, prompting the second user and the fourth user to allow the first user to join the IM chat session; and

in response to receiving an indication that the second user and the fourth user want to allow the first user to join the IM chat session, facilitating joining of the first user

to the IM chat session.

- Claim 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

indicating to the first user that the IM message is being conveyed to the third user.

- Claim 11. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

indicating to the third user that the IM message originated from the first user.

- Claim 12. (Canceled).

- Claim 13. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

further indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the first recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that an IM chat session is being established between the first user and the third user.

- Claim 14. A communication system comprising:

a memory component that stores at least the following:

receiving logic configured to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;

waiting logic configured to wait a predefined time interval prior to prompting the first user for permission;

first prompting logic configured to prompt the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;

in response to receiving permission, conveying the IM message to the third user;

determining logic configured to determine whether the second user is

currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user;

indicating logic configured to indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user;

second prompting logic configured to prompt the first user to join the IM chat session;

third prompting logic configured to, in response to receiving an indication that the first user wants to join the IM chat session, prompting the second user and the fourth user to allow the first user to join the IM chat session; and

joining logic configured to, in response to receiving an indication that the second user and the fourth user want to allow the first user to join the IM chat session, facilitating joining of the first user to the IM chat session.

- Claim 15. A communication system comprising:

means for receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;

means for waiting a predefined time interval prior to prompting the first user for permission;

means for prompting the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;

means for, in response to receiving permission, conveying the IM message to the third user;

means for determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM

chat session with a fourth user;

means for indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user;

means for prompting the first user to join the IM chat session;

means for, in response to receiving an indication that the first user wants to join the IM chat session, prompting the second user and the fourth user to allow the first user to join the IM chat session; and

means for, in response to receiving an indication that the second user and the fourth user want to allow the first user to join the IM chat session, facilitating joining of the first user to the IM chat session.

- Claim 16. A non-transitory medium that stores a program that, when executed by a computer, causes the computer to perform at least the following:

receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;  
wait a predefined time interval prior to prompting the first user for permission;  
prompt the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;  
in response to receiving permission, convey the IM message to the third user;  
determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user;

indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an

IM chat session with the fourth user;

prompt the first user to join the IM chat session;

in response to receiving an indication that the first user wants to join the IM chat session, prompt the second user and the fourth user to allow the first user to join the IM chat session; and

in response to receiving an indication that the second user and the fourth user want to allow the first user to join the IM chat session, facilitate joining of the first user to the IM chat session.

- Claim 17. The non-transitory medium of claim 16, the program causing the computer to additionally perform at least the following:

receive an input from the first user, the input being indicative of the permission to convey the IM message to the fourth user; and

~~convey the IM message to the third user in response to receiving input from the first user.~~

- Claim 18. The non-transitory medium of claim 17, the program causing the computer to additionally perform at least the following:

indicate to the first user that the IM message is being conveyed to the third user.

- Claim 19. The non-transitory medium of claim 17, the program causing the computer to additionally perform at least the following:

indicate to the third user that the IM message originated from the first user.

- Claim 20 (Canceled).
- Claim 21 (Canceled).

- Claim 22. The non-transitory medium of claim 16, the program causing the computer to additionally perform at least the following:

indicate to the first user, in the absence of a response from the second user during the predefined time interval, that the second user is unavailable.

- Claim 23. A communication system comprising:

a memory component that stores at least the following:

receiving logic configured to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;

waiting logic configured to wait a predefined time interval prior to prompting the first user for permission;

prompting logic configured to prompt the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;

conveying logic configured to convey the IM message to a the third user;  
determining logic configured to determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user;

indicating logic configured to indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user;

first prompting logic configured to prompt the first user to join the IM chat session;

second prompting logic configured to, in response to receiving an indication that the first user wants to join the IM chat session, prompt the second user



and the fourth user to allow the first user to join the IM chat session; and

joining logic configured to, in response to receiving an indication that the second user and the fourth user want to allow the first user to join the IM chat session, facilitate joining of the first user to the IM chat session.

- Claim 24. A communication system comprising:

means for receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;

means for waiting a predefined time interval prior to prompting the first user for permission;

means for prompting the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;

means for conveying the IM message to a the third user;

means for determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user;

means for indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user;

means for prompting the first user to join the IM chat session;

means for, in response to receiving an indication that the first user wants to join the IM chat session, prompting the second user and the fourth user to allow the first user to join the IM chat session; and

means for, in response to receiving an indication that the second user and the

fourth user want to allow the first user to joint the IM chat session, facilitating joining of the first user to the IM chat session.

- Claim 25. A computer-readable medium that includes a computer program that, when executed by a computer, causes the computer to perform at least the following:

receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first user to a second user;  
wait a predefined time interval prior to prompting the first user for permission;  
prompt the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user;  
convey the IM message to a the third user;

determine whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user; and

indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user;

prompt the first user to join the IM chat session;

in response to receiving an indication that the first user wants to join the IM chat session, prompt the second user to allow the first user to join the IM chat session; and

in response to receiving an indication that the second user wants to allow the first user to join the IM chat session, facilitate joining of the first user to the IM chat session.

- Claim 26. The computer-readable medium of claim 25, the program causing the computer to additionally perform at least the following:

indicate to the first user that the IM message is being conveyed to the third user.

- Claim 27. The computer-readable medium of claim 25, the program causing the computer to additionally perform at least the following:  
indicate to the third user that the IM message originated from the first user.
- (Canceled)
- Claim 29. The computer-readable medium of claim 25, the program causing the computer to additionally perform at least the following:  
further indicate to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user that an IM chat session is being established between the first sender and the third user.
- Claim 30. The computer readable medium of claim 25, further comprising prompting the fourth user to allow the first user to join the IM chat session.

***Reasons for Allowance***

6. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Prior art of the record neither alone or in combination among other limitations teaches, "waiting a predefined time interval prior to prompting the first user for permission;

prompting the first user for permission to convey the IM message to a third user; receiving an input from the first user, the input being indicative of the permission to convey the IM message to the third user; and

conveying the IM message to the third user in response to receiving the input.

determining whether the second user is currently engaged in an IM chat session

with a fourth user;

indicating to the first user, in response to determining that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with a fourth user, that the second user is engaged in an IM chat session with the fourth user.

7. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance".

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to TAUQIR HUSSAIN whose telephone number is (571)270-1247. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thu Nguyen can be reached on 571 272 6967. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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